

Use of Information and Communication Technology to teach English vocabulary: A study conducted in primary schools of the Western Province

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Sri Lanka has a proud heritage of free education from primary to tertiary levels and a youth literacy rate of 98%, a feat of which any middle-income country can be proud. The Sri Lankan government has taken steps to integrate ICT education into the school education curriculum since the year 2006. With a mission to drive ICT literacy in Sri Lanka forward, 4500 schools have been provided with ICT infrastructure for student-centred ICT learning. Teachers at local schools have been given a comprehensive training in all aspects of using ICT tools in the classroom. In addition to the initial training provided by the Ministry of Education, government-school-based ICT teachers are also being provided with continuous assistance in developing a pedagogical approach to ICT training through the Intel Teach Programme. This study investigated how ICT facilitates teaching of English vocabulary: the ways teachers use ICT in teaching English vocabulary and the problems that hinder teachers from using ICT in teaching English vocabulary. The design of the study was a survey; the area of the study was the Western Province with 1250 primary teachers selected as the sample. Three research questions guided the study, with a 24-item questionnaire used to collect the data. Mean scores were used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that though teachers supported the use of ICT for English vocabulary development, teachers do not use ICT in teaching English vocabulary. They identified problems that hinder their use of ICT in classroom instruction, including poor finances to procure computers and other relevant equipment; slow and frustrating network connectivity; unreliable power supply; limited access to computer facilities; and lack of computer skills among teachers and pupils.

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